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University Impact on Housing Supply and Rental Levels in the City of Boston

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February 1970

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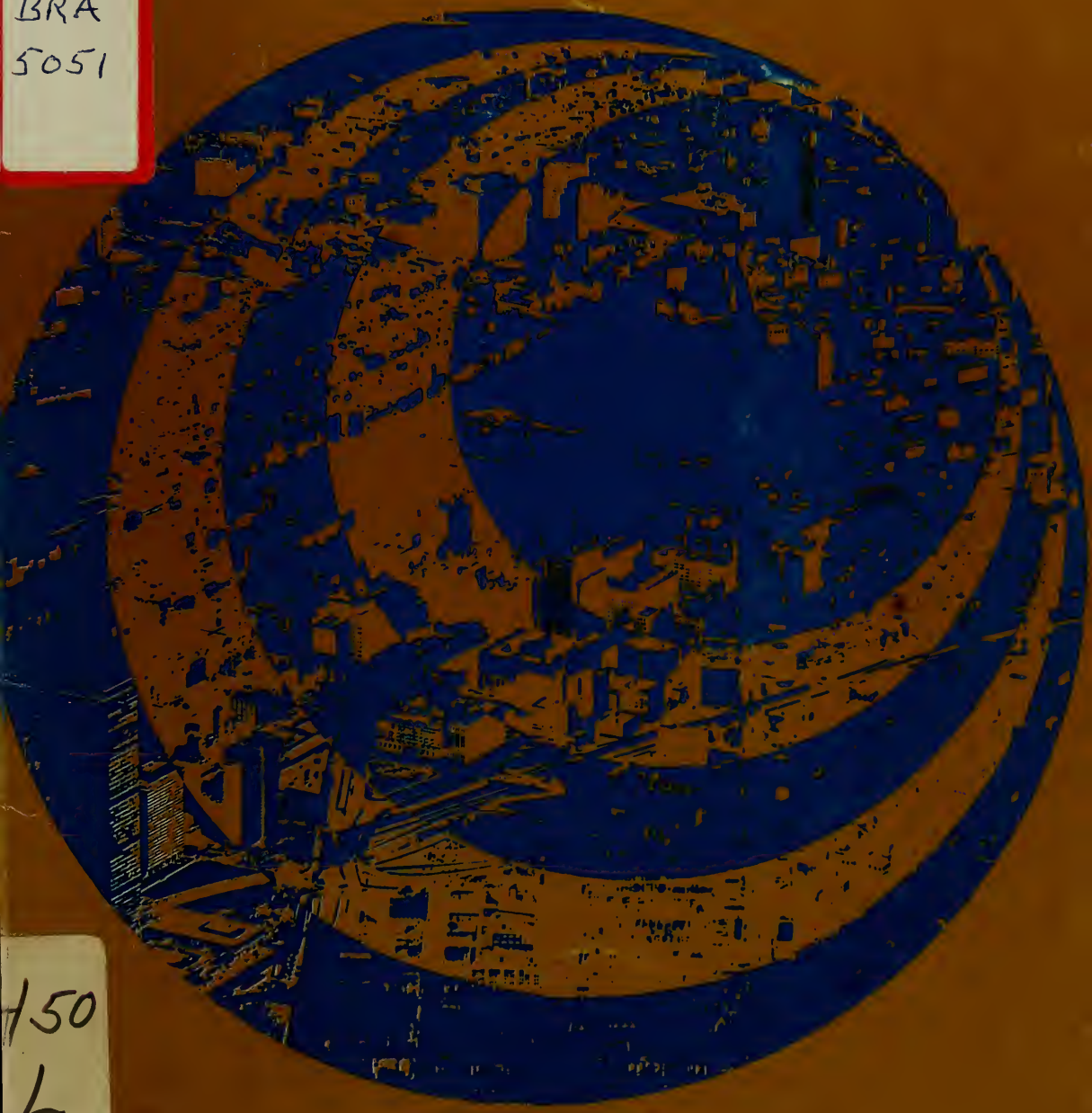

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UNIVERSITY IMPACT ON HOUSING SUPPLY AND RENTAL LEVELS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

prepared by

The Urban Institute of Boston University

for the

Mayor's Committee on the Urban University

February 1970

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Melvin R. Levin
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SUMMARY

The objective of this study is to assemble and analyze data on housing units in Boston now occupied by university students, staff and faculty. The results provide insight into the relationship between student housing, the overall housing shortage for low income families and rent levels. The research was prompted by the realization that higher education not only plays a major role in the area's social and economic structure but is also a significant component of the housing market. In 1968-69, 103,000 full-time students lived in the Greater Boston area enrolled in 50 institutions. The area's five largest universities, Boston College, Boston University, Northeastern, Harvard and M.I.T., provide the bulk of the demand for apartments in the private housing market. Approximately 19,000 students from these five universities are in the market for private apartments. If this figure is expanded to represent all of the 50 schools in the area there are over 30,000 students in greater Boston who are in the private housing market. Assuming an average of 2.5 students per dwelling unit, a total of 12,000 dwelling units in metropolitan Boston are occupied by students. In the City of Boston it is estimated that there are roughly 4,000 student-occupied apartments out of the city's total of 222,000 dwelling units. However most of the students are located in four neighborhoods.

At the present time, the area's major colleges and universities provide housing for about 45 percent of their undergraduate student body. The situation is different at the graduate level: of nearly 19,000 graduate students in the five-school sample, less than 4,000—about 20 percent—resided in university housing. In all, the universities provide space for only about one-third of their total full-time graduate and undergraduate student population.

Cambridge, which contains two of the area's largest universities, has a critical housing shortage partly because of student demand. The pressure would be even greater were it not for the fact that Cambridge in 1969 was a net exporter of over a thousand students to Boston. In 1969 a little over a thousand students enrolled in Boston institutions lived in Cambridge, but M.I.T. and Harvard each contributed about a thousand students who lived across the Charles River in Boston.

In addition to the 4,000 student-occupied units in Boston, it is estimated that another 1,200 units are occupied by university staff and faculty. Thus full-time students, faculty and staff in combination represent a substantial part of the housing market. University personnel occupied about eight percent of the 60,000 apartments in the Back Bay, Fenway, Brighton-Allston and Beacon Hill areas.

It appears that the sharp rental increases which have occurred in the Brighton-Allston area in recent years are not representative of the situation throughout the city. Figures indicate that the Beacon Hill area rents peaked during the late 1950's and increases have been relatively moderate since that time. Back Bay figures also indicate that peak rent increases have occurred earlier and the rent structure in the area is now becoming more stable. The Brighton-Allston area, however, is in a state of flux which is reflected by sharp increases in rent levels in the past three years, particularly for larger apartments.

Students are in competition for apartments with young professionals and executives and are frequently relegated to less desirable units because of their limited financial resources. Neither localized patterns of rent increases, nor the demographic changes which are occurring in the Allston-Brighton neighborhood can be solely attributed to university impact. The city can help the group most seriously affected by housing pressures by constructing more housing for the elderly. The area's colleges and universities might well explore the possibility of building thousands of housing units with a large proportion allocated for university personnel, at some open, accessible site like the Allston rail yards or by using expressway air rights.

UNIVERSITY IMPACT ON HOUSING SUPPLY AND RENTAL LEVELS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

Introduction

At the direction of the Mayor's Committee on the Urban University, Boston University's Urban Institute with the assistance of a summer student furnished by the Lincoln-Filene Center of Tufts University conducted a preliminary inquiry into the impact of the universities on Boston's housing supply and rent levels. The primary objective was to determine the number of housing units occupied by students, faculty and employees within the city of Boston and their impact on the city's housing market. Boston's colleges and universities are genuinely concerned by community complaints that university students are inflicting hardship upon the city's low income residents. The universities are also concerned about complaints by students, faculty and employees that they cannot find adequate housing at reasonable prices near the universities. This study not only attempts to provide a picture of current conditions but also an indication of the trend in recent years. It concludes with proposals for action which could alleviate housing problems.

Methodology

Two primary sources of data were used in this study. The principal body of information was collected from the five largest educational institutions in the Boston area: Boston College, Boston University, Harvard, M.I.T. and Northeastern University. A second source of data was research conducted during the summer of 1969 by students enrolled in Boston University's Master of Urban Affairs program. Other data sources have been noted in the text by appropriate footnotes and references. At each school in the interview sample, a contact person answered most of the survey questions; he was interviewed at least once and was asked to fill out a detailed follow-up questionnaire.

I. Enrollment Trends and Patterns

An analysis of enrollment trends in the 50 principal institutions of higher education[1] in the Boston area between 1958-59 and 1968-69 reveals an approximate 71 percent increase in full-time graduate and undergraduate student enrollment. This major increase in university population may be compared to a decline in the population of the city to the 600,000 level and a moderate ten percent population gain in metropolitan Boston. In the academic year 1968-69, the total enrollment in the 50 schools was 132,500 of whom 103,500 were full-time graduate or undergraduate students. Slightly under 20 percent of the full-time students in the 50 schools were graduate students.

Table 1 shows the enrollment trend at the 50 selected schools which represent most of the full-time colleges and universities in the area. (Complete data for all Boston area higher education institutions would probably reveal a higher percentage of part-time students.)

Limitations of research time and resources made it necessary to concentrate in this analysis upon the five largest institutions in and around Boston, all of which are located in Boston or Cambridge. Detailed information in student housing patterns was obtained from the five largest institutions, Northeastern, Boston University, Harvard, M.I.T. and Boston College.

The data from these institutions show that gains in enrollment have been greatest among younger students of whom a greater proportion live in dormitories. Full-time undergraduate enrollment has increased by nearly 80 percent in the ten-year period while graduate enrollment has increased by only 50 percent during the decade. One of the more interesting figures is the modest growth of part-time graduate and undergraduate students in the five institutions. This group grew by only one-third during the ten-year period, about half the growth rate of undergraduates.

Enrollment trends for the five-school sample are shown in Table 2. It provides data for the five institutions which contain 40,000, or 49 percent of the 81,100 full-time undergraduate students in the area's 50 colleges and universities, and nearly 19,000, or 85 percent of the 22,400 full-time graduate students. The five schools contain 57 percent of the area's 103,500 full-time students.

This report focuses on full-time students, faculty and staff. In the authors' opinion the housing needs of part-time students, faculty and staff should not be considered a university responsibility, since for the most part their residential locations are primarily linked to their families or full-time job requirements rather than to their schools. Enrollment in higher education institutions by part-time students is usually established after housing location has been decided. Similarly it is difficult to assign the burden to the universities of housing college dropouts, young professionals and working people drawn to the university environment or of rehousing poorer persons displaced by more affluent individuals who prefer to live near universities. The housing problems of the inner cities are so large and intractable as to require action on a scale far beyond the resources of the universities and indeed, of the cities themselves. Considering their financial plight, universities would be doing well to satisfy the immediate demand of their full-time students and young faculty. Therefore, while some suggest that the universities have a moral responsibility to provide for the housing needs of all persons attracted to the university environment regardless of the tenuousness of their affiliation, this is surely an extreme and unrealistic position.

TABLE 1

STUDENT ENROLLMENT TREND OF FIFTY SELECTED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN METROPOLITAN BOSTON

Academic Year	All Students	Full-Time Undergraduate	Full-Time Graduate	Total Full-Time	Part-Time Graduate and Undergraduate
1959-60	82,403	45,425	15,014	60,439	21,964
1965-66	108,764	62,205	18,659	80,864	27,900
1968-69	132,531	81,119	22,413	103,532	28,999
Increase 1959-60 to 1968-69	50,128	35,694	7,399	43,093	7,035
Percent Increase	60.8%	78.6%	49.5%	71.3%	32.0%

Source: New England Board of Education, Facts About New England Colleges and Universities, Annual issues.

Should they expand then?

TABLE 2

1968-69 STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN THE FIVE-SCHOOL SAMPLE

Schools	All Students	Full-Time Undergraduates	Full-Time Graduates	Total Full-Time
Northeastern	34,502	12,431	777	13,208[1]
Boston University	19,414	12,868	3,197	16,065
Harvard	13,959	4,834	9,125	13,959
Boston College	8,813	5,921	1,801	7,722
M.I.T.	8,249	3,857	3,873	7,730
Total Five School Sample	84,937	39,911	18,773	58,684
Total Fifty Schools	132,531	81,119	22,413	103,532
Five-School Enrollment as Percent of Boston Area	64%	49%	84%	57%

Source: New England Board of Education, Facts About New England Colleges and Universities, Annual issues.

[1] The Co-op system at Northeastern University results in a reduced number of full-time students to the equivalent of 10,000 on campus.

Northeastern in the 1969-70 academic year has approximately 20,000 part-time students, an enormous number compared to other area institutions. Boston University is second with roughly 3,000 part-time students. It should be noted that Northeastern's net full-time enrollment figure has been reduced to indicate the effect of the university's co-op plan.

In recent years there has been a much greater rise in female enrollment than in male enrollment. During the past three years female undergraduate enrollment in the five universities has increased by 40 percent while male attendance has increased by only 25 percent. In the graduate schools (which may have a greater impact on private housing because of fewer university restrictions) female enrollment over the past five years also grew by 40 percent as opposed to a male enrollment increase of only 30 percent. The housing impact associated with the relatively more rapid rise in female enrollment has not been ascertained, but it seems probable that women students are as interested in living in off-campus housing as their male counterparts.

II. Off-Campus Student Residences: Detailed Data From Five-School Sample

The identification of the number and location of housing units used by full-time students living off campus provides a yardstick for measuring the gross impact on the area's housing market. Table 3 presents a composite analysis of the location of off-campus students of the five-school sample. The five schools have 19,491 full-time students (graduate and undergraduate) living in off-campus apartments who occupy roughly 8,000 housing units. The City of Boston's share of this total is 7,500 students living in 3,000 housing units. Most of these students live in the Back Bay, Brighton-Allston, Beacon Hill and Fenway areas. Current data is not available, but it is believed that there has been a modest increase in the total number of apartments in these areas in the past decade. The 3,000 apartment units occupied by full-time students from the five-school sample represent about five percent of the total housing supply. Taking into account units occupied by faculty and staff of these schools, the number probably increases by about 1,000 units to a total of 4,000.[2]

One reason for concentrating the research on the five largest institutions is because they generate the bulk of the student demand for apartments in Boston. Other large schools in Boston exert little demand in relation to their total enrollment. Boston State College has, with 4,300 students, virtually no students living in apartments; Simmons has about 200 graduate students in apartments; Tufts has about 1,500 graduate students, of whom about 250 live in apartments, and the University of Massachusetts, with 3,300 students, has only about 150 undergraduates residing in nearby apartments. Overall it is estimated that there are about another 2,500 students living in Boston who occupy approximately another 1,000 housing units over and above the 3,000 Boston apartments occupied by students enrolled in the five larger schools. Therefore it appears probable that

about 5,000, or eight percent of the roughly 60,000 housing units in the four specified areas are occupied by full-time university students, faculty and staff. The data indicate that undergraduates who live three to an apartment constitute almost half of the off-campus load by number but only about one-third of the dwelling unit load by volume.[3] Because of their apparently more limited financial resources, undergraduates are more efficient users of off-campus housing in the sense that more of them live in each unit.

Table 3 provides some idea of the area of influence of the large universities. Students tend to live in close proximity of their institutions. Boston University with the largest full-time student population has its strongest impact in Back Bay, Brighton and Allston. Boston College, understandably, has its greatest impact on Brighton, while Harvard and M.I.T. provide the bulk of student demand in the Cambridge housing market. Northeastern students are concentrated in the Fenway and Symphony portions of the Back Bay.

In Cambridge a total of 6,101 off-campus students live in approximately 2,000 private housing units which represents about six percent of the city's total units.[4] Due to the zoning regulations in Cambridge, it is estimated that there are three roommates per dwelling unit for both graduate and undergraduate students—a higher occupancy per unit than in Boston. (Brookline, on the other hand, is attempting to enforce a new ordinance which permits no more than two unrelated individuals to live in one apartment unit.) In Cambridge the majority of students come from Harvard and M.I.T. but a substantial number of Boston University students, mostly graduates, also reside in that city. (See Table 3.)

Cambridge possesses an attraction for many Boston area students which has not gone unnoticed by various housing groups,[5] but because of its critical housing shortage, Cambridge is nevertheless a net exporter of off-campus students. Table 3 shows that there are 687 college students enrolled in Boston institutions living in Cambridge. Of these 600 are from Boston University, 55 from Boston College and 70 from Northeastern. On the other side of the ledger, nearly 1,000 Harvard students and an equal number of M.I.T. students live across the Charles River in Boston. Cambridge is thus a net exporter of over a thousand college students.

Based on Table 3, roughly 20,000 students from the five largest area universities are in the market for private apartments. If the assumption is made that the average occupancy per dwelling unit is 2.5 students, then the present demand by full-time students in the five-school sample for off-campus student housing in the Boston metropolitan area is probably close to 8,000 units. Since this sample represents about 50 percent of the full-time students at the 50 institutions in the Boston area, in all probability the total demand for off-campus student housing is closer to 12,000 units.

TABLE 3

NUMBERS AND LOCATIONS OF FULL-TIME STUDENTS RESIDING IN PRIVATE APARTMENTS, FIVE-SCHOOL SAMPLE 1968-69

	Boston College		Boston University		Harvard[1]		M.I.T.		Northeastern		
	Under-graduate	Graduate	Under-graduate	Graduate	Under-graduate	Graduate	Under-graduate	Graduate	Under-graduate	Graduate	Total
Boston[2]	227		1,103	653			620		1,460		
Brighton	624		599	264	805[3]		100		68		7,501
Allston	157		514	217			70		20		
Brookline	266		664	329	189		190		140		1,778
Cambridge	55		302	260	601	3,113	1,700		70		6,101
Other Communities	232		192	450	1,434		895		108		3,311
Boston Total[4]	674	334	2,216	1,134	153	652	205	585	1,084	464	7,501
Total Full-Time	1,000	561[4]	3,374	2,173	1,167	4,975	916	2,659	1,866[5]	800	19,491
Total	1,561		5,547		6,142		3,575		2,666		19,491

Source: Data obtained from the five schools by a questionnaire distributed by The Urban Institute of Boston University.

Note: This table indicates those full-time students who maintain residence in apartments, which are not university-owned or managed, and not living with parents or guardians.

TABLE 4

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING CAPACITY AND OCCUPANCY IN THE FIVE-SCHOOL SAMPLE
1968-69

Schools	Dorm Capacity (Male and Female)	Vacancies (Male and Female)	Number of Females on Waiting List	Number of Males on Waiting List	Total Number on Waiting List
Boston College	1,461	0	70	130	200
Boston University	7,105	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Harvard	6,842	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
M.I.T.	2,243	0	N.A.	N.A.	300
Northeastern	4,030	0	150	50	200
Total	21,681	0	220	180	700

Source: Questionnaire

N.A.: Not Available

TABLE 5

RESIDENCES OF FACULTY AND STAFF:
HARVARD UNIVERSITY AND BOSTON UNIVERSITY
1968-69

	Boston		Brookline		Cambridge		Other		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Harvard[1]										
Faculty	697	12.9	516	9.5	1,313	24.2	2,894	53.4	5,420	100.0
Employees	1,465	23.5	232	3.7	1,830	29.3	2,712	43.5	6,239	100.0
Total	2,162		748		3,143		5,606		11,659	
Boston University[2]										
Faculty & Staff	790	27.7	242	8.5	272	9.5	1,550	54.3	2,854	

Source: Questionnaire

[1]Harvard includes as faculty members all part-time and full-time instructors at University-related facilities, persons working on research and grants and those on sabbatical leaves.

[2]Boston University figures combine faculty and staff and were obtained from the payroll name and address file.

III. The Role of University Housing

At the present time, the five schools provide campus housing for about 45 percent of their undergraduate student body. At the graduate level, university housing plays a significantly less important role. Of the 18,773 graduate students in the sample, less than 20 percent reside in dormitories. Table 4 shows the on-campus housing capacity of the five universities. Altogether, the universities provide space for about 25,000 students or about one-third of their full-time student population.

Housing for Faculty and Staff

The 50 schools in the Boston area have a combined total of 17,500 part-time and full-time staff and faculty members. The five schools represent about two-thirds of this total; however, of the schools surveyed only Boston University and Harvard had compiled any information regarding housing patterns of faculty and staff.

Table 5 shows the faculty and staff residence patterns for these two schools. Unfortunately, only one school had information respecting the distribution of employees who are not faculty members. Information even for Harvard and Boston University is incomplete because both contract out a number of services. For example, Boston University's food service is operated by a private contractor whose personnel are not employees of the University.

Less than half of the faculty and staff population of Harvard and Boston University lives in their respective communities. Only about one-third of Harvard's staff and faculty resides in Cambridge and only about one-third of Boston University's staff and faculty resides in Boston and Brookline. Quite likely, the staff and faculty residence pattern for these universities is comparable to other professionals employed in Boston and Cambridge. Faculty and staff preferences for housing locations appear to be considerably different than those of the student population. Whereas the large majority of full-time students live in close proximity to their universities, most faculty members apparently do not require or desire this same locational relationship. By the same token, it appears that most higher paid employees prefer suburban locations along with their non-university counterparts.

The growth in the number of faculty over the past decade has been smaller than expansion of total student enrollment. Faculty growth over the past nine years has been about 61 percent for full-time faculty compared to the 71 percent increase in full-time students in the same period. In terms of projecting future demand, it is quite reasonable to assume that the increase in student enrollment will be matched by a roughly comparable increase in university employment.

None of the universities have made a significant effort to provide housing for staff or faculty. Based on available data it is estimated that Boston area universities provide housing for less than five percent of their faculty members. While mature faculty members, particularly those with school age children, display a suburban residential preference comparable to other professionals working in Boston and Cambridge, it is possible that young faculty members, especially those who have no children, are in the market for housing near the universities. This group is probably a transitional one in that it is trapped between the desire to live near the universities but lacks the finances to compete in the nearby housing markets. However, although young faculty members with families are adversely affected by the housing situation, single members of this group probably follow the young persons' patterns of grouping together to pay high rents.

The universities do not provide housing for non-academic employees. Many of the persons in this group are low income, unskilled maintenance workers. Many reside in low income neighborhoods and tend to be excluded from competing in housing markets near the universities.

The question has been raised as to whether the universities should make an attempt to provide housing for their non-academic employees. As a rule, institutions which do not absolutely require their employees to relocate do not provide housing for them. Organizations like prisons, mental institutions, military bases and remote installations where there is no suitable supply of housing do provide staff housing facilities. Following the modern pattern of *not* providing "company housing" for employees, universities have focused their housing efforts primarily on single undergraduates and to a lesser degree on married students and young faculty members.

Although much of the pertinent data on married students is unavailable, Table 6 shows the number of married students enrolled in the five largest schools, and the housing arrangements at these institutions. Boston University currently provides 90 housing units for married students while there are over 2,200 married, full-time Boston University students. Harvard and M.I.T. are the only schools that have made any substantial effort to provide housing for married students; however, their effort appears to fall far short of the need. The figures for Harvard University indicate a lengthy waiting list: As of October 1968, there were roughly 1,900 married students enrolled at Harvard as compared to 834 occupied married student units. M.I.T., which also has about 1,900 married students, provides only 370 units. Thus M.I.T. provides housing for less than 20 percent of the total potential demand, a much smaller proportion than Harvard's 45 percent.

TABLE 6

MARRIED STUDENTS ON-CAMPUS HOUSING SUPPLY:
FIVE-SCHOOL SAMPLE
1968-69

Schools	University-owned Housing Units Married Student	Number of Current Vacancies	Number of Families on Waiting List	Number of Married Students		
				Under-Grad.	Grad.	Total
Boston College	0	0	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Boston University	90	0	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	
Harvard	834	0	1,500	213	1,693[1]	1,906
M.I.T.	370	0	400	N.A.	N.A.	1,891
Northeastern[2]	0	0	N.A.	745	194	939
TOTALS	1,294	0	1,900	958	1,887	4,736

Source: Questionnaire

[1]Harvard Married Graduate Students figures are estimated at 1,411 students who have Blue Cross Blue Shield Family Plans. The Harvard Planning Office estimates this to be underestimated by 15-20% due to wives who work outside and have other policies.

[2]Northeastern figures estimated on percentage basis from data collected in 1963.

TABLE 7

PROPOSED NEW ON-CAMPUS HOUSING UNITS: FIVE-SCHOOL SAMPLE

School	Under-graduate	Graduate	Faculty	Staff	Total
Boston College	500	0	0	0	500
Boston University	0	0	0	0	0
Harvard	398	199	300	0	897
M.I.T.	650	150	0	0	800
Northeastern	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	1,548	349	300	0	1,697

Source: Staff interviews.

Note: Figures indicate number of housing units being built or planned for early construction.

Proposed New Housing

Only three of the five largest universities at the time of the survey had adopted specific plans for expanding on-campus housing capacity: Boston College, Harvard and M.I.T. Boston University has no immediate plans, but it has recently completed a major dormitory expansion at 700 Commonwealth Avenue which provides housing for 1,650 students. Northeastern University tends to attract a commuter student body but, although it does generate a modest demand for off-campus housing, the University has no definite plans for housing construction. Table 7 indicates new housing construction which the various institutions are considering in the near future.

IV. Rent Levels and Student Concentrations

Students compete in the open housing market and occupy dwelling units that might otherwise be available to the non-academic population. A factor that has received great attention in recent years is the effect of these students upon rent levels in the Boston area. These students, some of them financially well off, usually join in groups of at least two and often three or four or more to rent apartments at prices which are totally out of the reach of most families and single persons. By pooling their resources they have undeniably helped to raise the rent levels around the universities. Questions have been raised by both the academic community and elected officials as to the role of the student population in rental levels and rent increases. Moreover, there is speculation that the effect of students in the housing market has been city-wide. This section attempts to determine if rent increases in various parts of the city have been keeping pace with rent levels in areas in which students tend to congregate.

Rental levels have been analyzed from an examination of classified advertisements for apartments dating back to 1950 using, as a basis for comparison, sections of the city that can be easily identified as student or non-student areas. It was found that rents in the non-student areas of the city such as Roslindale, Mattapan, Roxbury, Dorchester, Hyde Park and Jamaica Plain rose steadily between 1950 and 1969. The pattern in Brighton, Allston and most of the Back Bay, however, where known student concentrations exist, strikes a balance between the older low income sections of the city and the remodeled and new portions of the Beacon Hill and Back Bay areas. (See Appendix B for Tabular data.)

The newer, more expensive units in the Back Bay and on Beacon Hill, such as Charles River Park, the Prudential Center and the new Beacon Street apartments, appear to be well beyond the reach of students as well as most young professionals. Instead, student pressure concentrates on older units built during the nineteenth century and early 1900's.

There is no dispute that high and rising rent levels have driven low income families and single persons from parts of the Back Bay and the Fenway and are in the process of doing this in the Brighton and Allston areas. There is some question concerning the extent to which this phenomenon can be attributed to the ability of students to pay high rents.

Data compiled from classified ads on rental levels in Boston neighborhoods in the period 1950-1966 and 1966-69 revealed the following:

Allston. Rentals for three room apartments increased by 40 percent between 1950 and 1966, rising from $63 in 1950 to $88 in 1966. Between 1966 and 1969, however, there was a major increase in rents to $138. An even more striking increase occurred between 1966 and 1969 for advertised five room apartments where rents rose from $108 to $235.

Back Bay. As in the Allston area, rents for three room apartments rose moderately—28 percent—from 1950 to 1966 from $83 to $106. Between 1966 and 1969, however, there was a rapid rise to $185. Rents for five room apartments rose from $91 in 1950 to $210 in 1966 to $290 in 1969. Many Back Bay advertisements for small apartments were for units in new buildings.

Beacon Hill. Rents for three room units rose steeply, more than doubling from $78 in 1950 to $160 in 1966 with a lesser, under 20 percent, increase to $190 in 1969. The few advertisements for five room apartments in 1950 averaged $80 and by 1966 the level had risen very sharply to $300. This contrasts with the smaller rises in rental levels for smaller units.

Brighton. Rents in Brighton for advertised three room apartments rose substantially (80 percent) from $65 in 1950 to $110 in 1966 up another 50 percent to $166 in 1969. Many of these higher rentals were for units in new apartment buildings. Five room units increased by lesser percentages; they averaged $105 in 1950, rising to $127 in 1966 and to $150 in 1969.

Dorchester. This area is typical of the low to moderate income areas which have so far not experienced any appreciable influx of students or young professionals. In comparison with other areas, rent increases have not been great. Rents in Dorchester for three room apartments rose from $60 a month in 1950 to $90 in 1966 and $100 in 1969. Advertised rentals for five room apartments rose from $52 in 1950 to $85 in 1966 and $92 in 1969. Many of these units are in old, wooden three decker buildings.

This data offers evidence to support the hypothesis that it is in areas which are currently undergoing a transformation from working class and lower middle class to students and young professional persons that rents have risen steeply in

recent years. In contrast, rental levels on Beacon Hill which experienced this influx earlier also peaked earlier; rental increases in recent years have been relatively modest.

Many changes in living habits which affect rent levels are taking place. Increasingly, executives and professionals who do not feel the need for suburban lawns or suburban public schools and who are employed in Boston and in other core cities are interested in housing close to jobs, cultural activities and in-town stores. Urban complexes which combine housing and office space (such as the Prudential Center) represent a new urban pattern. Employees of the Massachusetts General Hospital and other medical facilities, along with persons employed in offices and banks, are part of a developing pattern of reducing travel time. This pattern is also evident at universities: students like executives want to live reasonably close to their daytime location. There is also a trend toward independence for the young. Boston area students who might have lived at home and commuted to Harvard, M.I.T. or Boston University twenty years ago now find it essential or at the very least desirable to live in apartments, preferably in close proximity to the campus. A reduction in travel time is only one reason for this desire.

This study has not shown whether persons who formerly lived in the Brighton-Allston area, which is undergoing the most rapid change at the present time, have moved to other parts of the city or to the suburbs because of housing preference or were forced out by rent pressures. Neighborhoods tend to be composed of groups of like people and unless current trends are reversed this area will probably lose most of its present family population which will be replaced by students and young professionals. In the process, many of the large apartments in the area will be converted into smaller units. From the standpoint of fiscal efficiency in the city, the physical separation of families with school age children from entire neighborhoods has definite benefits. It is far less costly to service school children concentrated in distinct neighborhoods rather than dispersed throughout the city. (In fact, it may be argued that the present allocation of fiscal responsibilities in which the city is assigned a major share of school costs places a premium on stimulating decreases in the number of public school children.)

V. Housing Impact

Non-Students

In reviewing the data, it becomes evident that the housing problems associated with the universities do not result from students alone. In many people's minds, young non-students (with or without beards and bell bottoms) are considered "students." These young people who may have no formal connection

with any university have an impact like students in local housing markets: Often they pool their financial resources to pay the high rents that are prevalent around the universities, but because they usually have incomes from jobs or other sources, there are generally fewer of these persons per apartment. Thus, on a per capita basis, young, single and married people with no direct ties to local colleges and universities have a greater impact upon the Boston housing market than students.

It may also be noted that the living patterns of the young non-students resemble those of students in that their leases usually expire on August 31 along with most student leases, thus, they join students in competing for September apartments. The desire to change roommates, an interest in trying something new as well as the prevalent lease renewal patterns result in the massive annual housing search of late August and early September which occurs in the Boston neighborhoods most attractive to students and young non-students alike: the Back Bay, Brighton-Allston, Beacon Hill and Cambridge. The situation reminds one of the annual migration of alewives in eastern Massachusetts or of smelt swarming in the inland rivers.

The impacted areas have special attractions for young persons. For example, while other parts of the city have not had much improvement in public transportation in the past decade, some of the impacted areas have benefited from improved and new transit services. Furthermore, commercial developments over the past ten years, such as the construction of new office buildings like the Prudential Center, the rapid expansion of medical complexes in the Back Bay and the construction of the Government Center, have all served to tighten the housing market not only by eliminating housing units but by expanding the number of job opportunities for young executives and professionals who find the Back Bay and Cambridge fully as attractive as college students and young faculty.

Thus, although the universities should not minimize their impact on the housing market, they should be aware that their contribution to the area's general economic, social and cultural attractions may be more significant in creating competition for housing in certain areas than their direct impact in the form of off-campus students, staff and faculty. In addition there is evidence to support the hypothesis that a pecking order is in operation in these areas with senior professionals and executives bidding up the rents for their junior counterparts while both combine to raise rents for the less affluent student population. Furthermore, this process makes it feasible for landlords to price apartments out of the reach of working class families and older, retired persons.

Elderly

The group that is probably hardest hit by the high rents around the universities is the elderly. Their plight is aggravated by two factors. First, elderly people are usually living on a fixed income derived from meager pensions or social security benefits which are not responsive to constant increases in the cost of living. Second, because of physical and economic limitations most of these older people cannot afford to own or are unable to operate motor vehicles and are thus fully dependent on the public transportation system in the city. Because the areas around the Boston universities are well served by public transportation, they are ideally located as residences for these captives of the public transportation system. While it is theoretically possible that older people especially single, unrelated individuals who constitute the majority of the elderly could band together to offer competition to the students, from a practical point of view matching roommates for Golden Agers is a difficult and often impossible task. The net result of these factors is that older people are suffering from "economic evictions" and are forced to find housing in older and usually less accessible parts of the city.

Fortunately, housing for the elderly is one of the few types of public housing which has attracted broad and sustained public and legislative support in Massachusetts. If appropriate sites can be found, a substantial increase in the number of units for older persons could greatly alleviate one of the city's most serious housing problems.

VI. Direct Impact of University Expansion on The Housing Supply

There is clear evidence that the expansion of the physical facilities of colleges and universities in Boston has removed a number of housing units from the market. Although data on the extent of the impact has been difficult to obtain and to correlate, it is estimated that over the past ten years, between 1,000 and 2,000 units have been removed from the non-university housing market. The actual figure may well be closer to the lower end of the range depending on the assumptions that are made in the calculations.

On the whole, conceptions regarding the acquisition of dwelling units for university purposes are probably exaggerated. For example, although Boston University in the past ten years has acquired 27 structures on Bay State Road, these structures contained only about 100 apartments. In other cases, the universities have acquired apartment buildings which had already been occupied by students. Therefore, although these units have been taken off the housing market, in a sense the universities have not thereby reduced the city's housing stock available to non-university people.

In the South End, the medical centers have had modest impact on the supply of housing. Although the Boston University Medical Center prior to 1960 had acquired nearly 80 buildings, many of these structures were uninhabited or condemned and therefore not part of the city's housing supply at the time of acquisition. Tufts New England Medical Center has acquired only 25-30 housing units since 1960 while the Harvard Medical School has removed 20 units from the housing market. The Harvard School of Public Health has acquired 62 units which are being retained for student housing. Thus it is difficult to assess with any degree of precision the university impact on the city's housing stock. In the case of the Medical Centers much of their expansion has been confined to sites which, containing uninhabitable dwellings at the time of purchase, were acquired through the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

Another purpose of university expansion is the buying of apartment as well as non-apartment buildings for non-housing uses. In this area, some of the city's smaller colleges have had a significant impact on the housing supply. For example, Chamberlayne Junior College has acquired structures containing 150 dwelling units and Berklee School of Music acquired 20 apartments for its non-housing needs. Grahm Junior College converted a hotel to classrooms, probably necessitating the relocation of some full-time residents. It is quite likely that a majority of the dwelling units removed from the housing market in the Beacon Hill, Back Bay and Brighton-Allston areas have been the result of expansion of smaller educational institutions. The list of 50 universities (see Appendix A) contains the names of at least 15 smaller colleges whose addresses suggest that their establishment must have involved removal of housing units from the open market. In contrast, the larger universities usually purchase larger sites occupied by commercial, industrial or institutional enterprises. Boston University's acquisition of Braves Field and Temple Israel are examples.

As a result of site acquisition problems in Boston, some institutions have sought relief in the suburbs. Bentley College's expansion in Waltham is a prime example since a comparable expansion at its present location would have had a substantial impact on the local housing market. Similarly, Northeastern's Burlington campus and its other suburban operations diminished the potential demand for sites in Boston. It is possible that these two schools are setting a trend for other universities and colleges.

VII. Directions for University Housing Policy

As a matter of policy, to the extent that adequate sites can be made available, universities whose students, faculty and staff are both contributing to and victimized by housing pressures in Boston may wish to remove part of the problem by providing more housing for university personnel. An alternative, university construction or sponsorship of housing for the general community, is not

believed to be feasible on any substantial scale. Moreover, any university action in housing construction must be designed and located so that it causes no removal in the number of available housing supply or diminution of taxable property. Few of the in-town universities own or have immediate access to sites which meet the criteria of proximity, ample size and no displacement. A site such as the Commonwealth Avenue Armory could conceivably meet Boston University's needs but even this type of possibility may not be available to other institutions. For this reason, it may be wise to explore the possibilities of bold, joint action on a new, large scale, tax paying housing venture.

From a study of the location of the area's universities, particularly the larger ones which have the bulk of the full-time undergraduate and graduate student enrollment, the ideal location for such housing based on the extent of the demand in the Back Bay, Brighton, Allston and Cambridge areas might be a location directly on the Charles River in the vicinity of the Boston University Bridge. Such a location would provide not only service to Boston University and other nearby Boston institutions but would also be located midway between Harvard and M.I.T. There is a large open area at this location: the section of Allston now occupied by a variety of railroad and warehousing uses that has been in the past suggested as a site for a Boston stadium and other civic and industrial large scale enterprises such as the NASA development. Another alternative might be use of air rights over the Massachusetts Turnpike Extension or over the Inner Belt in the event that it is completed in Boston and Cambridge. A third alternative is scattered unit construction in and around university neighborhoods on sites which do not involve displacement of low income families.

Objections have been raised to the creation of university "ghettos" on the grounds that (a) students don't want to live in segregated quarters and (b) mingling students with the general population is an enriching experience for both. These arguments can be answered by ensuring that the management and operation of this housing development has no direct connection with universities. Moreover, a substantial proportion of the housing might be reserved for non-students at going market rates to provide a reasonable population mix. In addition this open housing policy would help to increase the tax return to the city through a dual rental system.

It should be noted that provision of the full amount of estimated demand would not necessarily relieve the tight rental situation around the universities. Any vacancies may quickly be filled by the growing number of young professionals and working girls attracted by a university environment. The abdication of *in loco parentis* attitude of the universities may reduce the desire of the universities to build and operate on-campus housing; however, it in no way diminishes the need for housing near the institutions.

There may well be an opportunity for universities to cooperate with the City of Boston in constructing a significant number of housing units for university students, faculty and staff. The figures show that based on students living off-campus there is a current demand in the Boston area of about 12,000 dwelling units which would accommodate on the order of 30,000 students. If half of these units were to be built at the cost of $15,000 each, the total cost would be at least in the $100 million range. Such an undertaking is not beyond the capacity of large financial institutions such as banks and insurance companies. Furthermore, with the leverage of the Boston universities and the availability of federal funds, this objective might conceivably be accomplished by the universities acting in concert. In any event, the Mayor's Committee may wish to explore alternative action with appropriate public and private agencies.

FOOTNOTES

1. This group of schools was compiled from the roster maintained by The New England Board of Higher Education. It includes all of the colleges and universities which could conceivably have an impact on housing in Boston. Due to limitations in time and staff the survey was confined to the five largest institutions. (See Appendix A for full list and location map.)

2. This figure can at best be considered highly conjectural but it is believed to be within a reasonable order of magnitude.

3. These ratios were adopted from a survey by Ann Flynn entitled: *A Survey of Boston College Students Living in Apartments,* Office of the Dean of Students, Boston College, November 13, 1968. This unpublished research related the number of students living in apartments to the total number of apartments used for student housing purposes.

4. This calculation is based on 34,000 occupied Cambridge dwelling units reported in the 1960 Census of Housing. Like Boston, Cambridge has experienced both new construction and demolitions since 1960 which tend to counterbalance each other.

5. See, for example, *Cambridge: Crisis in Housing,* Urban Planning Aid, Inc., and The Urban Field Service of the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cambridge Housing Convention, December 14, 1968, p. 3.

6. Housing data is not available for institutions which contain about 35 percent of the area's undergraduates and eight percent of the graduate students. However a much higher proportion of these students live at home or in dormitories so that their inclusion results in only modest changes in the figures for Boston presented in this study.

7. Data extracted from newspaper classified sections did not reveal the age or condition of the apartments that were advertised for rent.

APPENDIX A

FIFTY SELECTED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN METROPOLITAN BOSTON

1. Andover-Newton Theological School
   210 Herrick Road, Newton

2. Bentley College
   500 Beaver Road, Waltham

3. Berklee School of Music
   1138 Boylston Street, Boston

4. Boston College
   140 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton

5. Boston Conservatory of Music
   8 Fenway, Boston

6. Boston University
   755 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston

7. Brandeis University
   415 South Street, Waltham

8. Burdett College
   160 Beacon Street, Boston

9. Cambridge Junior College
   49 Washington Avenue, Cambridge

10. Cardinal Cushing College
    129 Fisher Avenue, Brookline

11. Chamberlain School of Retailing
    90 Marlboro Street, Boston

12. Chamberlayne Junior College
    128 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston

13. Curry College
    848 Brush Hill Road, Milton

14. Eastern Nazarene College
23 East Elm Avenue, Quincy

15. Emerson College
130 Beacon Street, Boston

16. Emmanuel College
400 Fenway, Boston

17. Episcopal Theological School
99 Brattle Street, Cambridge

18. Fisher Junior College
118 Beacon Street, Boston

19. Forsyth Dental Center School
140 Fenway, Boston

20. Franklin Institute of Boston
41 Berkeley Street, Boston

21. Garland Junior College
409 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston

22. Grahm Junior College
632 Beacon Street, Boston

23. Harvard University
Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge

24. Hebrew Teachers College
43 Hawes Street, Brookline

25. Hellenic College
50 Goddard Avenue, Brookline

26. Lesley College
29 Everett Street, Cambridge

27. Mary Brooks School
107 Marlboro Street, Boston

28. Massachusetts Bay Community College
57 Stanley Avenue, Watertown

29. Massachusetts College of Optometry
178 Newbury Street, Boston

30. Massachusetts College of Pharmacy
179 Longwood Avenue, Boston

31. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge

32. Mt. Ida Junior College
777 Dedham Street, Newton

33. Mt. Alvernia College
20 Manet Road, Newton

34. Museum of Fine Arts School
230 Fenway, Boston

35. New England Conservatory of Music
290 Huntington Avenue, Boston

36. New England Institute of Anatomy and Embalming
656 Beacon Street, Boston

37. Newton College of the Sacred Heart
855 Centre Street, Newton

38. Northeastern University
360 Huntington Avenue, Boston

39. Perry Normal School
815 Boylston Street, Boston

40. Pine Manor Junior College
400 Heath Street, Brookline

41. Portia Law School
45 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston

42. Radcliffe College
10 Garden Street, Cambridge

43. Simmons College
94 Pilgrim Avenue, Boston

44. State College at Boston
625 Huntington Avenue, Boston

45. Suffolk University
41 Temple Street, Boston

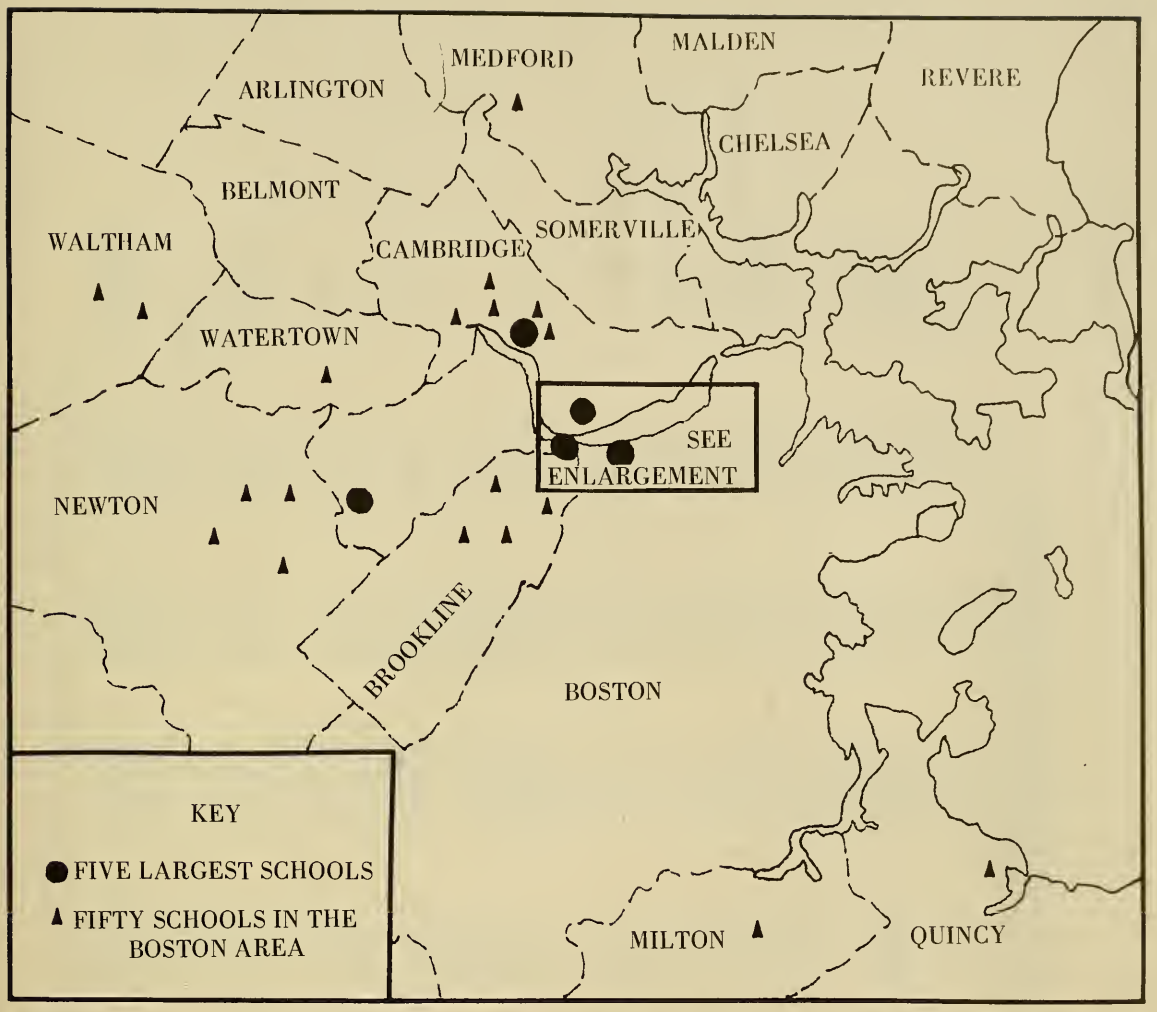
46. Tufts University
Medford

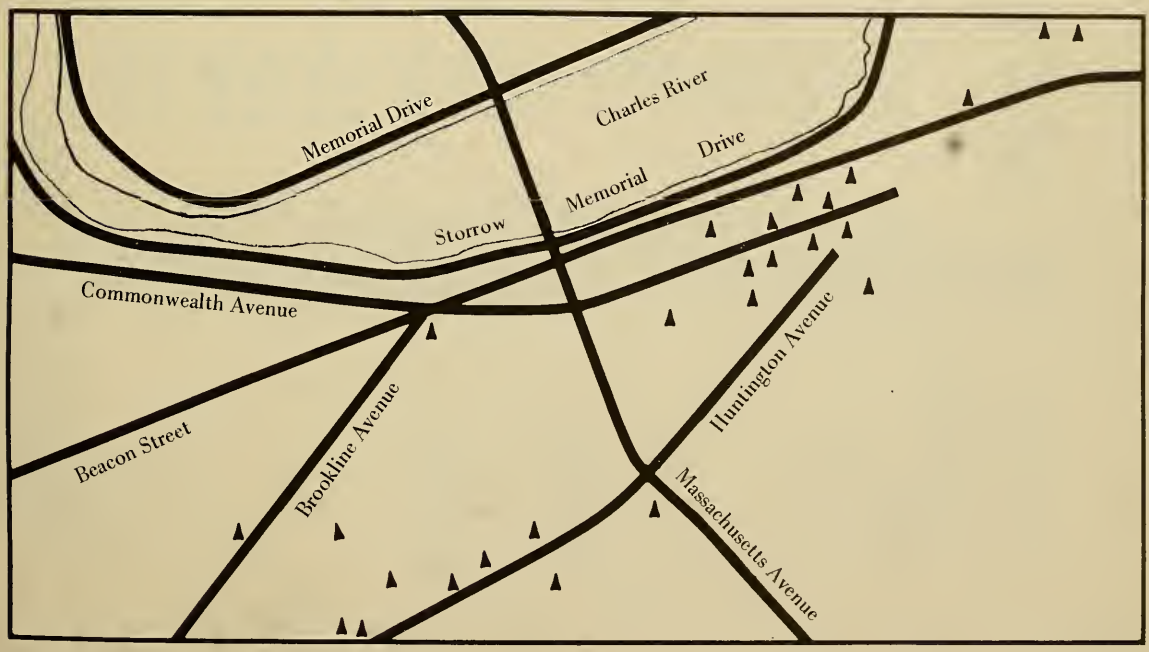
47. University of Massachusetts at Boston
250 Stuart Street, Boston

48. Wellesley College
Wellesley

49. Wentworth Institute
515 Huntington Avenue, Boston

50. Wheelock College
200 Riverway, Boston


MEDFORD
MALDEN
ARLINGTON
REVERE
CHELSEA
BELMONT
WALTHAM
SOMERVILLE
CAMBRIDGE
WATERTOWN
SEE
ENLARGEMENT
NEWTON
BROOKLINE
BOSTON
KEY
FIVE LARGEST SCHOOLS
FIFTY SCHOOLS IN THE BOSTON AREA
MILTON
QUINCY


Memorial Drive
Charles River
Drive
Memorial
Storrow
Commonwealth Avenue
Huntington Avenue
Beacon Street
Brookline Avenue
Massachusetts Avenue

AVERAGE BOSTON RENT LEVELS, JANUARY AND JUNE FOR
1950, 1960, 1966, 1969, BY DISTRICT AND APARTMENT SIZE*

District	Yr. & Mo.	1 room	2 rooms	3 rooms	4 rooms	5 rooms	6 rooms
ALLSTON	1950-Jan.	–	–	$ 66^{2}	$ 95^{1}	$ 95^{1}	–
	1950-June	$ 48^{3}	$ 73^{3}	$ 60^{3}	$ 65^{3}	$ 72^{5}	–
	1960-Jan.	$ 69^{4}	$ 65^{2}	$ 84^{11}	$ 87^{5}	$ 95^{10}	combined with 5 rooms
	1960-June	$ 60^{6}	$ 73^{3}	$ 95^{9}	$ 96^{12}	$103^{5}	$ 82^{3}
	1966-Jan.	$ 75^{1}	$ 85^{2}	$ 85^{4}	$112^{5}	$ 95^{9}	–
	1966-June	$ 98^{5}	$ 93^{6}	$ 92^{14}	$104^{12}	$108^{15}	combined with 5 rooms
	1969-Jan.	$ 65^{1}	$ 66^{2}	$ 95^{1}	$ 95^{1}	–	–
	1969-June	$104^{9}	$153^{3}	$138^{19}	$174^{8}	$235^{16}	$325^{3}
BACK BAY	1950-Jan.	$ 67^{4}	$ 63^{3}	–	$120^{4}	–	–
	1950-June	$ 51^{14}	$ 61^{20}	$ 83^{18}	$ 88^{7}	$ 91^{5}	$ 98^{4}
	1960-Jan.	$ 63^{7}	$ 66^{6}	$ 70^{5}	$112^{4}	$ 70^{2}	–
	1960-June	$ 71^{26}	$ 88^{14}	$ 83^{14}	$106^{9}	$ 83^{8}	$108^{2}
	1966-Jan.	$ 95^{3}	$ 75^{1}	$109^{5}	$159^{4}	$184^{4}	combined
	1966-June	$ 89^{17}	$ 98^{7}	$106^{30}	$154^{12}	$225^{5}	combined
	1969-Jan.	$160^{12}	$ 89^{5}	$162^{24}	$234^{23}	$250^{3}	–
	1969-June	$116^{37}	$107^{8}	$185^{54}	$235^{41}	$300^{9}	combined

*raised numbers are size of sample. Averages with small sample (less than 5) are unreliable, but are included anyway.
–a dash means no listings in this category.

District	Yr. & Mo.	1 room	2 rooms	3 rooms	4 rooms	5 rooms	6 rooms
BEACON HILL	1950-Jan.	–	–	–	–	– (no listings)	
	1950-June	$ 65[3]	$ 73[4]	$ 78[7]	$ 74[6]	$ 80[2]	–
	1960-Jan.	$ 85[2]	–	$ 85[2]	–	–	–
	1960-June	$ 70[3]	$ 83[9]	$ 86[10]	–	$ 90[1]	–
	1966-Jan.	–	–	$139[4]	$125[2]	–	–
	1966-June	$105[8]	$111[2]	$160[11]	$182[7]	$301[5]	$355[2]
	1969-Jan.	$141[9]	$185[2]	$177[20]	$249[12]	$377[5]	–
	1969-June	$129[24]	$106[3]	$193[42]	$281[28]	$225[5]	–
BRIGHTON	1950-Jan.	–	–	$ 85[1]	$ 88[1]	–	–
	1950-June	$ 50[2]	$ 63[3]	$ 63[7]	$ 76[4]	$105[2]	–
	1960-Jan.	$ 74[5]	$ 95[2]	$ 76[8]	$107[11]	$100[20]	combined with 5 rooms
	1960-June	$ 65[2]	$ 68[4]	$ 75[33]	$101[22]	$105[10]	$112[4]
	1966-Jan.	$ 80[3]	$ 73[3]	$107[23]	$124[13]	$128[26]	combined
	1966-June	$ 96[13]	$ 81[5]	$110[36]	$121[42]	$125[16]	$146[23]
	1969-Jan.	$113[9]	–	$139[22]	$176[17]	$151[21]	combined
	1969-June	$115[41]	$ 85[2]	$166[79]	$194[62]	$132[3]	$260[15]
CHARLESTOWN	1950	–	–	$ 60[4]	$ 44[6]	$ 50[6]	$ 75[2]
	1960	–	–	$ 30[2]	$ 25[2]	$ 31[6]	–
All small sample	1966	–	–	–	$150[4]	–	$ 60[2]
	1969	–	–	$121[4]	$241[7]	–	–

District	Yr. & Mo.	1 room	2 rooms	3 rooms	4 rooms	5 rooms	6 rooms
DORCHESTER	1950-Jan.	–	–	$ 65^{3}	$ 61^{4}	–	–
	1950-June	–	$ 41^{6}	$ 56^{7}	$ 55^{4}	$ 52^{4}	$ 68^{15}
	1960-Jan.	–	$ 50^{2}	$ 52^{11}	$ 57^{10}	$ 65^{25}	combined
	1960-June	–	–	$ 66^{14}	$ 69^{29}	$ 67^{31}	$ 79^{16}
	1966-Jan.	–	–	$ 85^{11}	$ 88^{14}	$ 89^{31}	combined
	1966-June	$100^{2}	–	$ 90^{27}	$ 93^{42}	$ 83^{72}	combined
	1969-Jan.	$115^{1}	$ 84^{4}	$ 80^{12}	$ 93^{27}	$ 92^{85}	combined
	1969-June	$100^{1}	$ 63^{2}	$116^{11}	$106^{30}	$ 93^{27}	$ 91^{9}
EAST BOSTON	Not more than 15 listings for all size apartments for all four years.						
HYDE PARK	1950 *	–	–	–	–	–	–
	1960	–	–	$ 80^{3}	$ 97^{3}	$ 90^{2}	$112^{2}
	1966	–	$ 70^{1}	$106^{6}	$110^{17}	$106^{26}	$ 98^{10}
	1969	–	–	$149^{6}	$193^{3}	$125^{5}	–
JAMAICA PLAIN	1950	–	–	–	–	–	–
	1960-Jan.	–	–	$ 80^{3}	$ 67^{7}	$ 80^{9}	combined with 5 rooms
	1960-June	$ 50^{2}	$ 70^{1}	$ 61^{7}	$ 70^{12}	$ 76^{6}	$112^{5}
	1966-Jan.	–	–	$ 70^{3}	$ 69^{9}	$ 92^{10}	combined
	1966-June	$ 70^{2}	$ 75^{4}	$ 90^{12}	$ 97^{23}	$ 84^{30}	combined
	1969-Jan.	$130^{2}	$100^{1}	$ 45^{2}	$ 78^{16}	$103^{17}	–
	1969-June	$127^{3}	–	$109^{7}	$128^{15}	$100^{3}	combined

* When no listings appeared in the January papers, only June of each year is given.

District	Yr. & Mo.	1 room	2 rooms	3 rooms	4 rooms	5 rooms	6 rooms
MATTAPAN	1950 *	–	–	–	–	–	–
	1960	–	–	$ 90[2]	$ 97[2]	$ 85[4]	–
	1966	$ 90[1]	–	$108[7]	$118[12]	$ 89[13]	combined
NORTH END	Less than ten listings in all four years.						
ROSLINDALE	1950 *	–	–	–	–	–	–
	1960	–	–	–	$ 70[6]	$ 83[4]	combined
	1966	–	–	$114[5]	$ 90[12]	$105[16]	$109[9]
	1969	$130[2]	–	$145[5]	$145[7]	$130[5]	combined
SOUTH BOSTON	1950 *	–	–	–	–	–	–
	1960	–	–	$ 56[4]	$ 35[4]	$ 42[3]	–
	1966	–	$ 95[1]	$ 79[3]	$ 60[2]	$100[1]	–
	1969	$140[1]	$133[5]	$ 50[1]	$ 75[2]	–	–
ROXBURY	1950	–	$ 35[1]	$ 40[11]	$ 46[13]	$ 73[14]	–
	1960	–	–	$ 51[13]	$ 60[20]	$ 77[9]	–
	1966	–	–	$ 75[17]	$ 84[29]	$ 82[26]	$ 77[13]
	1969	–	–	$138[9]	$169[9]	$129[5]	$185[1]

* When no listings appeared in the January papers, only June of each year is given.

(Source: *Boston Globe:* first three Sundays in January and June of 1950, 1960, 1966 and 1969)

From: "Determination of Boston Rent Levels Since 1950," by Mrs. Anstis G. Benfield, July 1969.

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L Levin, Melvin R. etal
University Impact on Housing
Supply & Rental Levels in the
City of Boston.

DATE	ISSUED TO

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Univ
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